

**CITY OF SEATTLE**

**RESOLUTION \_\_\_\_\_**

..title

A RESOLUTION prioritizing people over the profits of pharmaceutical companies; supporting the production of COVID-19 vaccine around the world; urging President Biden to end U.S. opposition to the Waiver from Certain Provisions of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement for the Prevention, Containment and Treatment of COVID-19 at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

..body

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a global pandemic, spreading internationally; and

WHEREAS, rapid and widespread dissemination of vaccinations is at the center of the strategy

by public health professionals to stop the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on April 9, 2021, CNBC quoted World Health Organization (WHO) Director-

General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus regarding vaccine doses that “over 87% have

gone to high-income or upper- and middle-income countries, while low-income countries

have received just 0.2%,” and that “[o]n average, 1 in 4 people in high-income countries

have received a coronavirus vaccine, compared with just 1 in more than 500 in low-

income countries, according to Tedros”; and

WHEREAS, on February 17, 2021, *The Wall Street Journal* reported, “The disparity could also

slow the global economic recovery more broadly and prolong the pandemic, by creating

pockets of unchecked infection that could become breeding grounds for mutations of the

virus,” and that “[a] recent study by the U.S.-based National Bureau for Economic

Research concluded that a failure to inoculate all countries equitably could wind up

costing advanced economies up to \$2.6 trillion—far more than the cost of supplying

global vaccine coverage”; and

WHEREAS, the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of

Intellectual Property Rights (“TRIPS Agreement”) enforces intellectual property (IP)

rights internationally, including prohibiting the production of COVID-19 vaccine doses  
in many low-income countries; and

WHEREAS, the WTO has been widely criticized for prioritizing the profits of multinational  
corporations over the needs of regular, working-class people around the world, prompting  
the historic protest in Seattle in 1999 at the WTO Ministerial Conference; and

WHEREAS, global trade laws under capitalism maximize profits for the elite in all countries, at  
the expense of all working people around the world and especially in the Global South;  
and

WHEREAS, on March 15, 2021, *Pharmaceutical Technology* reported that WTO representatives  
from South Africa and India “asked the WTO to allow member countries to waive  
intellectual property (IP) rights, including patents, related to Covid-19 vaccines and other  
technologies for the duration of the pandemic”; and

WHEREAS, the March 15 *Pharmaceutical Technology* article further reported that “the US, the  
UK and the European Union (EU), among other richer countries, have been vocal  
opponents of the IP waiver proposal” in addition to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and  
the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA);  
and

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2021, Reuters reported, “Richer members of the World Trade  
Organization (WTO) blocked a push by over 80 developing countries on Wednesday to  
waive patent rights in an effort to boost production of COVID-19 vaccines for poor  
nations”; and

WHEREAS, on February 26, 2021, a letter to President Biden signed by over 400 community  
organizations and labor unions (Attachment A to this resolution) stated that “we urge

1 your administration to lift the U.S. blockage of the ‘Waiver from Certain Provisions of  
2 the TRIPS Agreement for the Prevention, Containment and Treatment of COVID-19’;  
3 and

4 WHEREAS, the letter further entreats President Biden, “with so many of the world’s nations  
5 supporting this emergency waiver already, you can also help restore America’s moral and  
6 public health leadership in the world by siding with the majority to prioritize saving lives  
7 over protecting pharmaceutical corporation monopolies and profits. This new position  
8 would be widely noted, given U.S. officials’ shameful attack on the waiver at a January  
9 WTO meeting”; and

10 WHEREAS, the Seattle City Council does not agree with the argument made by large  
11 pharmaceutical companies in a December 8, 2020, IFPMA press release that “IP enables  
12 research and development and ensures that the next generation of inventors and investors  
13 will remain engaged”; and

14 WHEREAS, on November 18, 2020, *Scientific American* reported, “Much of the pioneering  
15 work on mRNA vaccines was done with government money, though drugmakers could  
16 walk away with big profits,” and that “[t]he vaccines made by Pfizer and Moderna, which  
17 are likely to be the first to win FDA approval, in particular rely heavily on two  
18 fundamental discoveries that emerged from federally funded research: the viral protein  
19 designed by Graham and his colleagues, and the concept of RNA modification, first  
20 developed by Drew Weissman and Katalin Karikó at the University of Pennsylvania”;  
21 and

22 WHEREAS, on April 8, 2021, *The New York Times* reported about Dr. Katalin Karikó,  
23 explaining that she is “one of the heroes of Covid-19 vaccine development. Her work,

1 with her close collaborator, Dr. Drew Weissman of the University of Pennsylvania, laid  
2 the foundation for the stunningly successful vaccines made by Pfizer-BioNTech and  
3 Moderna,” and that “[s]he never made more than \$60,000 a year”; and

4 WHEREAS, the Seattle City Council recognizes that big pharmaceutical companies profiting off  
5 human misery is nothing new, and that there is widespread outrage at artificially high  
6 prices for life-saving insulin, EpiPens, and drugs to treat cystic fibrosis and tuberculosis,  
7 and at patent monopolies on essential AIDS medications that made them inaccessible and  
8 unaffordable in the Global South for a decade; NOW, THEREFORE,

9 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE THAT:**

10 Section 1. The Seattle City Council joins the more than 400 community organizations,  
11 labor unions, faith groups, and more in urging the Biden Administration to end the US  
12 opposition to the Waiver from Certain Provisions of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual  
13 Property Rights Agreement for the Prevention, Containment and Treatment of COVID-19 at the  
14 World Trade Organization (WTO). The Seattle City Council urges the Biden Administration to  
15 immediately share publicly all research, technology, techniques, and other information relevant  
16 to the production of COVID-19 vaccines (such as mRNA research) that is owned or co-owned  
17 by the U.S. The Seattle City Council shall sign onto the open letter to President Biden titled, “To  
18 Help End the Pandemic as Quickly as Possible and Restore U.S. International Cooperation,  
19 Please End Trump’s Blockade of the COVID-19 Emergency Waiver of WTO Rules So More  
20 Vaccines and Treatment Can Be Produced,” substantially as shown in Attachment A to this  
21 resolution.

Section 2. The Seattle City Council requests that the Office of Intergovernmental Relations communicate the content of this resolution to the Executive Office of the President and to Seattle's Congressional Delegation in Washington, D.C.

Adopted by the City Council the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021,  
and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President \_\_\_\_\_ of the City Council

Filed by me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)